



COVID-19 : Let's protect our mental health too !

Caring for our work environment – Employee

As businesses gradually reopen, a lot of people are going back to work. This process could cause apprehensions, stress and anxiety for workers in all sectors of activity. Below are some tips to help you cope with the situation.



➤ Find a routine to structure your workdays

- Begin and end your workday with a relaxing activity (taking a walk outside, listening to some music, reading a book/the news, having coffee outdoors, stretching etc.);
- Set simple daily goals (e.g. list of tasks);
- Organize your remote work in order to work better/more efficiently from home (if required);
- Find a good work/life balance, respect clear boundaries between work and personal time (having a regular working schedule, a dedicated space for working remotely in your home etc.).



➤ Allow yourself to rest

- Have some breaks and find time for mindfulness during your workday (be in the moment, breathing exercises, tai chi, yoga, meditation etc.);
- Try to create quiet moments (alone if possible) for yourself at home (self-care);
- Dedicate time to activities you particularly appreciate/that make you feel great.



➤ Stay healthy and take care of yourself

- Keep a healthy diet, be active every day and have a good sleep;
- Create a family plan for when you return to work (e.g. having a plan in case a family member becomes ill).



➤ Stay informed using reliable and credible sources of information

- Stay up-to-date with government announcements and measures;
- Enquire about preventive measures for COVID -19 that should be set up in the workplace and your working environment.



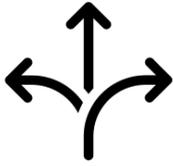
➤ Define and express your needs to key people in your workplace

- Identify elements which could restore reassurance, stability and calm in your working environment;
- Identify strategies that have successfully helped you manage stress and uncertainty in the past;
- Share your concerns/worries and/or restrictions/limitations with your supervisor;
- Share your concerns with trusted colleagues to get some advice or to validate your decisions.



➤ **Be creative in keeping in touch with colleagues and supervisors**

- It is recommended to use the phone or to meet online to share projects rather than emailing (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google hangouts etc.);
- Acknowledge and support your colleagues' contributions;
- Share winning actions and strategies with your team.



➤ **Try to be proactive and flexible**

- Accept the situation is creating a lot of uncertainties and that people will need time to adapt before they find a new comfort zone;
- Focus on what you can control in your life (respecting preventive measures for COVID-19, staying healthy, being positive etc.);
- Be solution oriented when facing challenges;
- Lower your standards and expectations (e.g. allowing yourself to slow down, deferring non-urgent tasks).



➤ **Be compassionate**

- Remember this is an exceptional situation and that stress reactions may vary;
- Try to be positive with yourself;
- Avoid being harsh on yourself when things are not advancing as quickly as expected or when you feel overwhelmed;
- Be considerate and care for others, in the way you would for someone you respect, the situation is difficult for everybody.

If pandemic circumstances are affecting your ability to take care of yourself and your family or preventing you from being able to do your job, do not hesitate to ask local organizations for information. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness!

- **Psychosocial Helpline: Info-social 811**
- **Suicide prevention lifeline: 1 866 APPELLE (277-3553)**
- **Workplace health and safety for Gaspésie and Magdalen Islands: 1 833 354-0009**
- **Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**
- **Mental Health resource Guide for the Gaspé Coast and the Magdalen Islands : https://casa-gaspe.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Mental-health-Guide_May9.pdf**

Other useful resources

- [Répertoire des services essentiels : http://ressortgim.ca/covid-19/](http://ressortgim.ca/covid-19/) (in french)
- <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19-info-en/Pages/back-to-work.aspx>
- <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/>
- <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en>
- <https://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/covid-19/irsst-notice>
- <https://www.cisss-gaspesie.gouv.qc.ca/covid-19/sante-mentale/> (in French)
- <https://www.cisss-gaspesie.gouv.qc.ca/employes-professionnels/des-reponses-a-vos-questions/>
- <http://cosme.ca/covid-19/boite-a-outils/> (in French)
- <https://covidgaspesie.com/en/employers-businesses/>
- <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/covid-19/formations/sante-au-travail> (in French)

We wish to highlight and thank Vision Gaspé-Percé Now for their contribution in the translation of this information sheet.